

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

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R 090930 Z MAR 73

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6246

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

UNCLAS HONG KONG 2356

EO. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PBOR, CH, UR

SUBJECT: PRC- USSR: NAVIGATION TALKS, TERRITORIAL NAMES AND CLAIMS

SUMMARY. FOR THE THIRD CONSECUTIVE TIME, THE SINO- SOVIET BORDER NAVIGATION TALKS HAVE ENDED WITHOUT AGREEMENT. THIS FAILURE FOLLOWS CLOSELY AN NCNA DENUNCIATION OF SIVIET MOVES TO RENAME PLACES IN THE EASTERN USSR. ANOTHER RECENT NCNA ARTICLE IMPLIED APPROVAL OF JAPANESE CLAIMS TO THE FOUR SOVIET- HELD NORTHERN ISLAND. END SUMMARY.

1. NCNC (MARCH 8) REPORTED THAT THE SINO- SOVIET JOINT COMMISSION FOR NAVIGATION ON BOUNDARY RIVERS HAD CONCLUDED ITS 18 TH REGULAR MEETING ON MARCH 5 WITHOUT AGREEMENT. THE TALKS, HELD IN THE HEILINGKIANG TOWN OF HEIHO BETWEEN JANUARY 5 AND MARCH 5, CONCLUDED WITH THE SIGNING OF A SUMMARY AND WITH AGREEMENT TO HOLD THE 19 TH MEETING ON THE SOVIET SIDE AT SOME FUTURE DATE.

2. COMMENT. THIS IS THE THIRD CONSECUTIVE SESSION OF THESE TALKS TO CONCLUDE WITHOUT AGREEMENT ON SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES-- THE LAST AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED IN AUGUST 1969. THIS FAILURE REFLECTS THE LACK OF PROGRESS BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES ON THE LARGER QUESTION OF THEIR COMMON BORDER.
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3. THE ANNOUNCEMENT COMES SOON AFTER AN NCNA CORRESPONDENT'S ARTICLE (MARCH 6) WHICH DENOUNCED THE SOVIETS FOR ALLEGEDLY CHANGING A NUMBER OF PLACE NAMES IN THEIR FAR EASTERN TERRITORIES FROM HAN CHINESE AND MANCHU WORDS TO RUSSIAN NAMES. CITING EXTENSIVE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE, INCLUDING RUSSIAN SOURCES, THE ARTICLE CHARGED THAT THE SOVIETS IN THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE BULLETIN OF THE SUPREME SOVIET OF THE SOVIET UNION, HAD RENAMED AT LEAST SIX PLACES KNOWN HISTORICALLY AS IMAN, SUCHAN, LIFUDZIN, KHUNGARI, TETYUKHE AND SINACHA. THE REASON FOR THESE CHANGES, SAYS NCNA, IS TO DEFEND " TSARIST RUSSIAN CRIMES OF AGGRESSION AGAINST CHINA." THE ARTICLE CITED FAVORABLY A NEW YORK TIMES COMMENT THAT THE SOVIETS SEEK TO REMOVE EVIDENCE THAT THE AREA WAS ONCE CHINESE. THE SAME MOTIVATION, IT CLAIMS, UNDERLIES EARLIER REVISIONS OF NAMES AND HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS WHICH GLORIFY " TSARIST RUSSIAN AGGRESSORS." IN ANY CASE, SAYS NCNA, EFFORTS BY " BREZHNEV AND HIS LIKE" ARE IN VAIN BECAUSE THERE ARE TOO MANY PLACES AND TOO MANY MAPS OF " THE CHINESE TERRITORY OCCUPIED BY TSARIST RUSSIA" FOR THEM ALL BE CHANGED OR DESTROYED.

4. COMMENT. THE ARTICLE, NOTABLE FOR ITS HISTORICAL DETAIL, APPEARS TO BE THE LATEST CHINESE JAB IN THE SINO- SOVIET POLEMICS OVER GEOGRAPHY, AND SEEMS TO GO SOMEWHAT BEYOND THE USUAL PRC LINE BY IMPLYING A LATENT CHINESE CLAIM AGAINST SOVIET TERRITORY.

5. IN A SIMILAR VEIN, AN NCNA FEATURE STORY FROM JAPAN (MARCH 6) DESCRIBED WITH GREAT SENTIMENTALITY A " HOUSE OF YEARNING FOR NATIVE LAND" ON NOSAPPU CAPE, AT THE EASTERN TIP OF HOKKAIDO, WHERE PEOPLE GO TO CATCH A GLIMPSE OF THE FOUR ISLANDS" UNDER SOVIET OCCUPATION." QUOTING FROM SLOGANS AND REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO FISHERMEN AND OTHER RESIDENTS OF NEMURO CITY, THE ARTICLE PAINTS A PICTURE OF SIVIET BULLYING AND INJUSTICES TO INDIVIDUAL JAPNESE. LIKE EARLIER PRC COMMENTARY, IT DOES NOT EXPLICITLY ENDORSE THE JAPANESE CLAIM TO THE ISLANDS, BUT CLEARLY IMPLIES PEKING'S SUPPORT.
OSBORN

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